

INTERVIEW WITH BOB SMITH
BY ART HAWKINS, NOVEMBER, 2000

[As tape begins Mr. Smith, Mr. Hawkins and two women who are relatives of Mr. Smith are having lunch and talking. There is also a young female child present. The younger of the two women describes a recent contact that she had with a horse, which is reticent to have her interact with it. The older woman describes the soup that is being served as lunch. As her story ends, Mr. Hawkins begins to ask Mr. Smith questions.]

MR. HAWKINS: Bob, why and how did you ever get started in wildlife work? Was your dad a hunter? Did he take you out quite a bit?

MR. SMITH: I used to go hunting with him when I could just trail along behind him. When I was just a little kid.

MR. HAWKINS: What were you hunting, squirrels and stuff like that?

MR. SMITH: We were hunting ducks.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you start out hunting ducks? Was that your first prey?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, ducks and [unintelligible], and coots.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you have any upland game around Mason City and Clear Lake?

MR. SMITH: Well, eventually we had pheasants, lots of pheasants. But there were still Prairie Chickens around when I was a kid.

MR. HAWKINS: But there were no pheasants until when? Was it just towards the later days that you were around there that the pheasants moved in?

MR. SMITH: I was probably thirteen or fourteen years old before I saw my first pheasant.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you shoot your first pheasant right off of the bat that first year?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, I shot him, and I thought it was an Otter. A rooster was sneaking along in a cornfield with a great big long tapering tail sticking out.

OLDER WOMAN: And you thought it was a what? An Otter?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, and I shot him with a .22 rifle.

YOUNGER WOMAN: Had you ever seen a pheasant before that?

MR. SMITH: No, I don't think so.

MR. HAWKINS: Did they increase fast enough then, before you left that area that there were plenty of pheasants?

MR. SMITH: There were lots of pheasants.

MR. HAWKINS: What about fishing? Was your dad a fisherman too?

MR. SMITH: Yes, he was a bait caster.

MR. HAWKINS: Was Clear Lake a good fish lake?

MR. SMITH: Well, we had Walleyed Pike, and Silver Bass, and Big Mouthed Bass.

MR. HAWKINS: But no Trout out in that area?

MR. SMITH: No.

MR. HAWKINS: So, you didn't get into Trout fishing until you went east to Dartmouth?

[Ladies talk again about the soup]

MR. HAWKINS: How come you took Geology as your major when you went to Dartmouth? Did they have anything in the way of Wildlife Management classes?

MR. SMITH: They had Zoology and Botany and Geology. But no one had ever heard of anything like Wildlife Management back then.

MR. HAWKINS: I guess that right. That would have been back in the late 1920s. When did you graduate?

MR. SMITH: In 1932.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you go directly to the Fish and Wildlife Service after you graduated?

MR. SMITH: No. I didn't go into the Fish and Wildlife Service until 1936.

MR. HAWKINS: So what did you do between graduation and the Service?

MR. SMITH: I worked in tire warehouse.

MR. HAWKINS: Where was that located?

MR. SMITH: That was in Mason City.

MRS. SMITH [?]: Well didn't you work on your Uncle's ranch too?

MR. SMITH: Well that was just one summer. And that was before I went to Dartmouth. I was sixteen years old.

MRS. SMITH: I like those stories.

MR. HAWKINS: How did you ever hear of the Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Bureau of Biological Survey as it was called then.

MR. SMITH: Well, I knew about the Biological Survey.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you have to take an exam to get in?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. There was also a Civil Service list. I had to take an exam for it. It was for Junior Biologist.

MRS. SMITH: Didn't you go to see Ding Darling?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. SMITH: Where was he, in Des Moines?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, Des Moines.

MRS. SMITH: Was he teaching then?

MR. SMITH: He was Chief of the Biological Survey, but his home was in Des Moines. Some friends of ours in Mason City knew him and set up this appointment. And I went down to Des Moines, but he didn't show up, so I called him at home. He came down to his office after supper and talked to me. While he talked he was sketching the whole time. He told me, "Forget about the waterfowl management. We've got just about all of the answers on the waterfowl. He told me to get into upland game.

MR. HAWKINS: Did he?

MR. SMITH: That's what he said.

MR. HAWKINS: That was before you got hired by the Fish and Wildlife Service, which would have been before 1936? The appointment with Ding was before that? And he said to go into upland game?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: And that was after he was Chief too?

MR. SMITH: He was Chief at that time.

MRS. SMITH: Why did he think that the answers were all had on the waterfowl? How could he possibly think that before the Survey started?

MR. SMITH: Well, they didn't know enough about what they didn't know.

MRS. SMITH: Right.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you immediately go into Refuges right off of the bat then?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: And your first station was in Arkansas, at White River?

MR. SMITH: White River.

MRS. SMITH: Were you a Refuge Manager?

MR. SMITH: I was a Biologist.

MRS. SMITH: So you worked at that Refuge, on what?

MR. SMITH: Waterfowl. I was sent down there to do an impossible job. I was supposed to try to enhance the waterfowl food situation on the bottomland flood plain. Everything that was growing there, that was it. But if anything else had been able to grow there, it would have been. I spent three years in futility you might say.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you spend two years at White River?

MR. SMITH: I think it was about three and a half.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, was it? And then you went to Sabine?

MR. SMITH: Sabine.

MR. HAWKINS: You must have goofed off badly at Sabine for them to send you into Washington.

MR. SMITH: Well, you know when you're just getting started you have to do what they tell you. So that's what I did.

MRS. SMITH: When you first went to Arkansas, didn't you live on a riverboat, of a flat boat or some kind of a barge or something with a little house on it?

MR. SMITH: Yes, a big house.

MRS. SMITH: Who owned that outfit where you camped?

MR. SMITH: I guess the Biological Survey did. There was a cook on there wasn't there?

MR. SMITH: We didn't have a cook. It was just to sleep on.

MRS. SMITH: Oh, I see. It was just parked there in the river.

MR. SMITH: There was a private couple. We ate with them.

MRS. SMITH: Was that where they had the pigs living under the front porch, and one of them used to rub her back on the porch?

MR. SMITH: She rubbed on the whole house.

MRS. SMITH: It would kind of shake.

MR. HAWKINS: When you went down to Sabine, was that a new Refuge at that time?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HAWKINS: And you went there as a Biologist too? And you were there for half a year or so?

MR. SMITH: Yes, and I was there for a few months.

MR. HAWKINS: But then, when you went in to Washington, you were still with Refuges?

MR. SMITH: Right.

MR. HAWKINS: Was J. Clark Salyer in charge at that time.

MR. SMITH: I'll say he was.

MR. HAWKINS: And you were right in his office?

MR. SMITH: I was right next-door. He could fling the door open and shout into my room.

MRS. SMITH: Is that what he did?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MRS. SMITH: Did you not like him?

MR. SMITH: Well yeah, I kind of liked him. I respected him for what he did.

MR. HAWKINS: He was a pretty demanding person wasn't he?

MR. SMITH: Yes he was. If he'd tell you to plant Spar gonium on the Moon, why, that's what he expected you to do.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you go out in the field much with him?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: You were his driver then I suppose?

MR. SMITH: Well, I don't remember about that. But he would come out to the field, and I would accompany him on a number of his forays, not only on the Refuges, but on other areas too.

MRS. SMITH: Was he looking for more likely places for new Refuges?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. He never turned down an area. He just grabbed land wherever he could get it. When I was at Washington they were in the process of negotiating Wheeler Refuge out in Alabama with TVA. That was quite a controversial thing. They sent me down there to negotiate with these people, and I ended up examining every acre of that Refuge by foot. There was a representative of TVA and we decided right there on the

ground, who was to have it, whether the TVA would retain it, or of they would give it to us.

MR. HAWKINS: The Bureau of Biological Survey was part of the Department of Agriculture then wasn't it?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, I guess it must have been because I remember we were still in the old "Ag" building. I commuted down there between Washington and Decatur, Alabama. I remember, I think it was the Southern Railroad, and in those days, the Pullmans always had a name on them. This Pullman was the "Joe Wheeler". Joe Wheeler was a famous Confederate General. They always had the same "darkie" for a porter. I knew him and would greet him every time.

MRS. SMITH: Did you say that the Refuge was named "Wheeler"?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MRS. SMITH: So it was named for that General.

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. HAWKINS: When did you get involved in the Klamat Basin? Was that right about that time too?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. That's a sad story. Do you remember Deacon Bach?

MR. HAWKINS: Yes, very much. He was an engineer.

MR. SMITH: Well his criteria for the value of land was very narrow. It was how many cows could graze on it, how much cordwood you could cut, or how much hay you could raise, or whatever.

MRS. SMITH: It was only based on economics.

MR. SMITH: But if it was just marsh, it was worthless, and he wouldn't pay anything for it. We could have bought the whole Klamat Marsh up there for a dollar an acre, and he wouldn't buy it. He thought it was worthless. I finally baggered him, just before they got the whole thing drained, into acquiring what was left. And I think they paid one hundred dollars and acre for it by that time.

MRS. SMITH: How many acres did they acquire at that time?

MR. SMITH: Well, there were several thousand.

MRS. SMITH: Just think. So maybe for five thousand dollars, they could have had five thousand acres. That is amazing.

MR. HAWKINS: You were in Washington for what, three years was it?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HAWKINS: Then, how did you change from Refuges to Flyway Biologist? Is that when you made the change?

MR. SMITH: Yes. I was in Research.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you immediately become a Flyway Biologist then?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: That was when Charlie Gillam resigned from the Service wasn't it?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MRS. SMITH: Did he resign because you came in?

MR. SMITH: Maybe.

MR. HAWKINS: No, Charlie had a farm in Illinois and he was an outdoor writer too. So he resigned to get involved more in that activity. Then he was tied into [unintelligible] and industry somehow I think too.

MRS. SMITH: Was he getting to retirement age?

MR. SMITH: I don't know. I don't think he could have been over fifty or fifty-five.

MRS. SMITH: Could you get back to that Klamat marsh for a minute, and tell Amy about the way it was? Weren't you out there with your sister one time in a boat and you staid overnight in the marsh? Tell her how rich it was.

MR. SMITH: Well, you could sleep in my boat. It had a couple of bunks in the cabin, and a little "Head" and sink and all. We were cruising around out there, and were going to sleep in the boat. We pulled up in the marsh, and in the evening, all of the Marsh Wrens, and Blackbirds and everybody, was talking. There was a Marsh Wren nest just about two feet from the bow of the boat and it was really nice. But we had to leave, the

mosquitoes got so bad. We pulled out into the open water of the lake, and finished the night out there. It's a beautiful marsh.

MRS. SMITH: It's over the mountain that way isn't it? We've gone by it driving home haven't we?

MR. SMITH: When you go over the mountain, and down the other side, you see the big marsh out there in front of you.

MRS. SMITH: How did you get your boat in there?

MR. SMITH: There are two or three access points that have a launching ramp.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you go in from this side or Chiloquin side?

MR. SMITH: From this side.

MRS. SMITH: Were there Grebes, like Western Grebes or Eared Grebes on the marsh making calls and everything.

MR. SMITH: There were Western Grebes. That call they make, it's kind of a creaking call. There was a pair of them tearing along the water. The mothers were cruising around with their babies on their backs. That's about my favorite Grebe.

MR. HAWKINS: Were there fish out there at that time?

MR. SMITH: Yep.

MR. HAWKINS: What kind?

MR. SMITH: Red Bands [sic?] That's where the original Red Band was described from.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh is it? It was from the Klamath, huh?

MRS. SMITH: You can imagine how good it made Bob feel when they finally decided to buy some of it.

YOUNGER WOMAN: So, the Fish and Wildlife Service bought it for one hundred dollars an acre? And how many years before that could they have bought it for one dollar an acre?

MR. SMITH: It was probably ten years. But in the mean time, about half of it got drained.

YOUNGER WOMAN: Was that because there were farms around it? Are there ranches?

MR. SMITH: There were, but they have now since reverted. It got so saline and water logged that they couldn't do anything with it, but it's been drained and diked off.

MRS. SMITH: There are a lot of cattle around that area, right?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. SMITH: So now they use it for cattle? The ranches just let the cows use it?

MR. HAWKINS: When you drive across from Chiloquin that was all part of the marsh originally wasn't it? Wasn't that pastureland all part of the marsh?

[Mr. Smith begins to answer and tape cuts out]

MR. HAWKINS: Who were some of the other people that you flew with besides Ev Sutton and Bill Matlock?

MR. SMITH: One summer, Jerry Stout promoted Bud Sevornik to go with me.

MR. HAWKINS: So Jerry went with you one year?

MR. SMITH: Not Jerry. Bud Sevornik did. [unintelligible first name] Clark, and Jim Johnson.

MR. HAWKINS: Jim Johnson, now where was he?

MR. SMITH: He was over in Idaho. Bob Allen of course, was with me for a few years.

MR. HAWKINS: Bob Allen was one of the earlier ones wasn't he in 1948?

MR. SMITH: Yes, in 1948. His first year was 1947.

MR. HAWKINS: Was 1947 your first year up there?

MR. SMITH: That was my second year up there with the L-5, and then the Widgeon.

MR. HAWKINS: When did Horton Judson fly with you?

MR. SMITH: He ended up with it.

MR. HAWKINS: He was the last one to fly with you, huh? And he went several years didn't he?

MR. SMITH: Yes, he did. I spent about two years trying to get Horton checked out in the Goose, and never did. He almost killed us all up at Hill [unclear] River.

MR. HAWKINS: When you were flying for the Whooping Cranes was that additional flying in that area? Was that survey work?

MR. SMITH: When I first went up there this was entirely a Whooping Crane operation. The transects weren't even laid out. We hadn't even seen the country.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, I didn't realize that.

MR. SMITH: That was the first stages of the transects. But it was primarily a survey for the Whooping Cranes.

MR. HAWKINS: And in the first year you got as far north as Great Slave Lake?

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. HAWKINS: And the next year, you went all of the way to the Arctic?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. And then the search for the Whooping Crane was essentially called off. Then I just ran transects for waterfowl.

YOUNGER WOMAN: Why did they call it off?

MR. SMITH: Well, this was a joint effort between Audubon and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Our primary duty of course, was waterfowl. And I don't know who terminated us, but Audubon didn't want to invest any more money in this is; or if it was the Fish and Wildlife Service that said that we had better get back to our waterfowl surveys. Maybe it was a combination of the two.

MR. HAWKINS: Well when you finally found them in 1952, were you just flying regular waterfowl transects then? These were right along one of the transects weren't they?

MR. SMITH: One of them was.

MR. HAWKINS: Then you went in to a search pattern and found the others after that. I was wondering; was Frank Banfield up in that area at that time? I was thinking that he was.

MR. SMITH: Banfield was on Artic coast, at the Bathhurst Inlet, and we were way down in the interior just out of [unintelligible].

MR. HAWKINS: Were you flying out of Fort Smith at that time too?

MR. SMITH: We did every year.

MR. HAWKINS: I mean, when you found the Cranes, you were flying out of Fort Smith?

MR. SMITH: No, I was flying out of Yellow Knife.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, Yellow Knife. How come your friend Lund; where did he meet you? Where was he then?

MR. SMITH: He was at Prince Albert. He lived down in Prince Albert.

MR. HAWKINS: That's where the news got out of the bag, at Prince Albert?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, I see. That's the first time that anybody outside had heard about it.

MR. SMITH: That's right. But he was sworn to secrecy.

MR. HAWKINS: But he leaked it, huh?

MR. SMITH: He couldn't wait to get down and tell the news media.

MR. HAWKINS: It spread rapidly from that point on didn't it? It went on the international news then.

MR. SMITH: Oh yeah.

YOUNGER WOMAN: Did they ever find them again? Did all of the people that were searching for them after the word leaked out; did anyone else find them?

MR. SMITH: Not there. They found them by accident down between Fort Smith and Hay River. [river's name not clear] They had a helicopter flying as part of a forest fire up there, and this helicopter pilot...

MR. HAWKINS: Was that the next year, then?

MR. SMITH: No, it was several years later. The pilot had a forester with him. And coming back, on the way to Fort Smith, this pilot saw these white birds down there in a muskeg type of place. So he made a circle around. The forester was asleep. He woke him up and had him look, and they decided that they were probably Whooping Cranes. They went back to Fort Smith. Bill Forrer [Unclear] was the Biologist there at that time. Did you know Bill?

MR. HAWKINS: No, I didn't.

MR. SMITH: Well, they got Bill, and packed him in there to go out and have a look. And sure enough, they were Whooping Cranes, and they were nesting. That's why flew up there in the Wood Buffalo Park. They have been there ever since then. That's why they make those surveys and counts, and what not. Where I found them, I never saw them again. I looked every year that I was up there. I went and wanted to have a good look. But I never saw them again. A number pilots flying between Yellow Knife and Hay River; that was a regular route. They would fly that route quite frequently. They told me that they had seen them. But I never did.

MR. HAWKINS: Well the helicopter that found them then; was that a Forestry mission?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, it was a Forestry flight. But it was a contract helicopter.

MR. HAWKINS: Was it Canadian?

MR. SMITH: Yeah, Canadian.

MR. HAWKINS: So Audubon was not involved in this after this?

MR. SMITH: Afterwards, yes. They sent Bob Allen in there. I don't think that Audubon is involved any more. This is an operation between the Canadian government and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. HAWKINS: You knew about this search flight that came a number of years later, I think it was even as late as towards the end of my career up there. Maybe it was when I was working on special things, after I retired. They had five or six planes that went out looking for Whooping Cranes, and I was on one of them. Did you know about that? That was in fairly recent years, probably in the late 1970s.

MR. SMITH: What were you looking for?

MR. HAWKINS: They were trying to find where the non-breeders were I guess, as much as anything, because it was late in the season. I flew with Mort Smith on that deal. Each of the pilots that were operating at that time had a certain area to look at. One of the things that I remember about it particularly was that it was one of the years of the Tent Caterpillar. Our northern point at that time was up around the Athabaska River, and at that point we noticed that all of the Aspen were denuded. We were about done with our survey, and we flew from there at kind of an angle all of the way to Riding Mountain in Manitoba. And in that whole slip, the Aspen were denuded, and it was just made you think in terms of how many caterpillars must have been involved. When we got into Manitoba, at Riding Mountain we found that they had been having a particularly bad siege of it. In some of the little towns that were up close to Riding Mountain, they were using bulldozers to clean off the highway from the death of the worms. They would pile up against people's doors, when they were trying to get into the house and things like that. It must have been unbelievable; billions and billions of caterpillars must have been involved in one particular year. I would have to check my records to see exactly what year that was, but it was a spectacular year from that standpoint. But nobody did ever find any Cranes.

MRS. SMITH: The caterpillars probably ate them!

MR. SMITH: Before we got involved in that far northern stuff, I did some Whooping Crane searching in Saskatchewan and Alberta when I had the L-5. Olin Petingill, III made the survey in the Peace River country.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, I remember that.

MRS. SMITH: Who was he? I thought he was a tourist.

MR. SMITH: He was a Boston [unintelligible] for one thing, I guess.

MR. HAWKINS: He was at Cornell when I was there. He was just finishing up his Ph. D. on the Wood Cock.

MR. SMITH: Then he became a professor at some school.

MR. HAWKINS: Carrollton College. He was a professor there for a number of years. I believe he is still alive. He went onto the speaking circuit for Audubon. He became a well-known authority and one of the leading Ornithologists in the country. He has written a number of books on Ornithology. But he was with you in the L-5 even before you had the Goose and the Widgeon?

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. HAWKINS: I didn't realize that. Was he working for Audubon at that time?

MR. SMITH: I don't know. He and his wife had just returned from the Athabasca Delta where they had been. I met him in Edmonton, and I took him around. We went back up into the Peace River country and beat that out. There was another area up there on the Athabasca where the Smokey came in. I can't think of the area. It was a big triangle where there were persistent reports from people about Whooping Cranes. I was working closely with Fred Bard in those days. He would get all of these reports, and I would go check them out. Of course, we never found anything.

MRS. SMITH: Who was Fred Bard?

MR. SMITH: He was the Curator in the Natural History Museum.

MR. HAWKINS: That had to be before...

MR. SMITH: It was before I got the Widgeon. I didn't get the Widgeon until... Well, I had a Widgeon to use for the summer of 1947.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh did you?

MRS. SMITH: But you only had the L-5 for one summer didn't you?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MRS. SMITH: I remember when you used to land it in Rutledge's pasture, and pump the gas in there.

MR. HAWKINS: These were observation planes that had been used in World War II weren't they?

MR. SMITH: The L-5 was.

MR. HAWKINS: How many did the Service get from that first [allotment]?

MR. SMITH: I don't know, but it was several.

MR. HAWKINS: And you got one of the first ones? Where did you pick that up?

MR. SMITH: It was brought out to Winona by Carl Peters.

MR. HAWKINS: Were you stationed at Winona by that time?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: I can remember the first time that I flew with you was on a Horseshoe Lake call. We were in the Cub chasing Geese from Horseshoe Lake to...

MR. SMITH: That was before I got an L-5.

MR. HAWKINS: That must have been when I was still with the Natural History Survey wasn't it?

MRS. SMITH: Yes, it was.

MR. HAWKINS: What year would that have been, when you had the Cub down at Horseshoe Lake?

MRS. SMITH: [Answering for Mr. Smith] Well it was before we joined the Fish and Wildlife Service. Bob got out of the Army in 1945, and it was during the late fall of 1945, I think, or early in 1946 when Bob came to Urbana.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh yeah, and I was still with the Natural History Survey, that's right. I recall that you had something like thirty-five hours of flying time by then. Then your assignment was to drive the Geese out of Horseshoe Lake down into the southern states.

MR. SMITH: That's when we were going to take a load to Memphis wasn't it?

MRS. SMITH: What were you going to do at Memphis?

MR. SMITH: I was going to drive the Geese down there.

MRS. SMITH: Oh, I see.

MR. HAWKINS: I remember that by the time we got to the Ohio River there was about one Goose left wasn't there?

MR. SMITH: There was quite a long string of Geese going down the river, and I was going back and forth behind them, trying to herd them down.

YOUNGER WOMAN: And you were getting them out of where?

MR. SMITH: Horseshoe Lake.

MRS. SMITH: That because the hunters down further south objected to the Geese staying up at Horseshoe Lake where it was so attractive for them. They had this wonderful refuge, and lots of food and everything. The Geese were holding up there instead of migrating. Wasn't that the reason Bob?

MR. SMITH: Yes, but it wasn't exactly a wonderful refuge. It was a kind of a death trap. It was completely surrounded by private lands where they shot. It was kind of a debacle there, every morning. But anyway, when we'd come to the end of this line, down on the one end, the Geese on the other end would peel off, and go back. And this went on and on and on. Finally you dad and I had one goose.

MR. HAWKINS: That was when the Geese were being hit so hard by hunting down there that they called a halt after forty-five hours or something like that. Wasn't that the case? About five days into the season, the Goose kill was so high that they cut it off.

MRS. SMITH: How many do you think they killed?

MR. HAWKINS: I don't know, the records are there but by that time, the Goose population in that Flyway was down to like forty-five thousand, or something like that. The kill at some of the Clubs was terrific. They were running hunters in there, they would get their limits and then a new group of hunters would go in.

MR. SMITH: That was even out of the same blind. They would go out there and shoot Geese, and then they would shove some other hunters in there.

MRS. SMITH: I wonder how much it cost for a hunter to go into a blind and get his limit?

MR. SMITH: I don't remember what they charged.

MRS. SMITH: It must have been quite an industry.

MR. HAWKINS: It was a terrific [Meaning a large sized operation] commercial deal. I remember that at the same time we were counting dead and crippled Geese that went back to the Refuge. We got some idea of how many Geese were being wasted that way. The crippling loss was very high. I remember that we found all kinds of carcasses. That's when some other studies were going on. Bill Elder and Nina were down there.

MRS. SMITH: They were at Horseshoe Lake?

MR. HAWKINS: They were making the study down there. That Horseshoe Lake situation was under study for a number of years. That's when Harold Hansen got started on his Goose work too.

MRS. SMITH: So how far did you get them on that day when you left Horseshoe Lake and taking them down, how many miles did you get?

MR. SMITH: Maybe twenty miles, I don't know?

MRS. SMITH: Well then when you got back that night, did you discuss it and say that it didn't seem to be working?

MR. SMITH: I suspect that we did, probably.

MR. HAWKINS: I don't think that was trying again after that. I think that was the end of the trials by that time. It just didn't work.

MRS. SMITH: When you were flying that day, and trying to herd them, were you both just laughing at how futile it was?

MR. HAWKINS: Well it wasn't a laughing matter because those Geese that were drifting off, some of them were coming right ... [towards the plane]

MR. SMITH: I don't know whether we were amused or not.

MRS. SMITH: When they were peeling off, were you worried that they were actually going to get caught in your blades or your engine?

MR. SMITH: Well, when we'd go in one direction those Geese would peel off. And when we went the other way, those Geese would peel off.

MR. HAWKINS: The Geese probably got a big kick out of the whole operation.

MRS. SMITH: Yeah, they probably thought that it as a lark!

MR. SMITH: A little afternoon exercise!

YOUNGER WOMAN: How many did you start with?

MR. SMITH: I had the whole works, didn't we?

MR. HAWKINS: We nice a nice bunch...

[Tape stops and starts]

YOUNGER WOMAN: How interesting! What a concept.

MR. SMITH: But it didn't work.

YOUNGER WOMAN: And it was just the two of you? No one else was with you that day?

MR. HAWKINS: Not in the Cub. After you got the L-5 at Winona, was that the same year that we went up to Canada?

MR. SMITH: It must have been in 1946.

MR. HAWKINS: I picked up your car, and you took the [plane].

[Tape stops]

MR. HAWKINS: ... the arrangement to put in down in Rutledge's pasture.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, we had to find a place to put it nearby.

MR. HAWKINS: That was the same pasture where Joe Perew had the storm come up and it did a lot of damage to the plane. Do you remember that?

MR. SMITH: No.

MR. HAWKINS: You weren't around by that time of course. That must have been two years later anyways. The next year Dave Spencer was up there flying. And then Joe Perew, it must have been in about 1948. They were still using Rutledge's pasture. They had it tied down and this terrible storm came up and ripped it loose. I don't remember how much damage it did to the plane.

MR. SMITH: What kind of plane did he have?

MR. HAWKINS: The same one, an L-5. I was doing a lot of the aerial work at that time, and Joe was a big, long, lanky guy.

MR. SMITH: I remember.

MR. HAWKINS: When he pushed seat back to fit him, it didn't fit me any more.

MR. SMITH: I remember Joe telling about flying the duster with an open cockpit. He would fly over this homestead every day with his load of the [chemicals] to dust the cotton, or whatever. He sat so high in the airplane, and all of the little kids would come out and watch him. They would say, “Momma, here comes the man flying the airplane standing up!” [All laughing]

MR. HAWKINS: That L-5 was not what you would call a luxury plane to ride in. That bar would get you in the back. And the seat would slide back for tall pilots, so there wasn’t much room in the back end. What was the plane that time when you and Johnny Lynch and I flew around White Lake in Louisiana to look at those Whooping Cranes down there? Do you remember that we had a Whooping Crane that came up? We got right close to one and you couldn’t hear it but you could see it. That was at the south end of White Lake wasn’t it?

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. HAWKINS: What kind of plane were we in?

MR. SMITH: It must have been the L-5.

MR. HAWKINS: There couldn’t have been three people in the L-5 could there? I remember that you and Johnny picked me up at Stuttgart with all of the baggage. I had my suitcase with me. It must have been the Cub or something.

MR. SMITH: I don’t remember Johnny at all, being involved in that operation.

MR. HAWKINS: Maybe it was just the two of us then.

MR. SMITH: I think it was just the two of us. Because all I had was the L-5. I didn’t have a bigger airplane.

MR. HAWKINS: Johnny must not have been with us then. Somehow, I had it in the back of my mind that he was with us. I remember that flying down from Stuttgart, we looked at a bunch these “sneak blinds” which were very common in those days down in Louisiana. The hunters were putting out bait and had their...

[Tape two ends]

MR. SMITH: ...and after that, I never heard from him. I found out later that he was so chagrined at having done this, instead of going with me; he wouldn’t write, and I thought he was mad about something. You know how he used to get.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh yeah, very well.

MR. SMITH: When he came down to see me, he explained all of this.

MR. HAWKINS: So he came down to see you after that? Well, he was a strange fellow in lots of ways.

MR. SMITH: He certainly was.

MR. HAWKINS: I forget when it started, but pretty soon, the Service was his football for kicking around. He blamed me for a lot of it. He always thought that I was promoting more liberal regulations. I don't know how he ever got that idea, because I was just the opposite.

MR. SMITH: He had some strange ideas for sure.

MR. HAWKINS: And then, towards the end, we got friendly again. He stopped off at our house after that time when went to Leopold's for the Leopold one hundredth anniversary. He stopped of to visit. At least at the end, we were friends again. But there was a period there when he blamed me for everything. He even blamed me for...we had an Agent up there Charlie Horner. He had a cottage down towards the store from where we were. Apparently he didn't pay his bills or something or other...

MRS. SMITH: Who was this that you are talking about?

MR. HAWKINS: Charlie Horner.

MRS. SMITH: And who else?

MR. HAWKINS: [Name unintelligible] Al blamed me for that, and I had nothing to do with it whatsoever.

MRS. SMITH: That's right, I remember.

[Mrs. Smith is looking at and commenting on a sketch that some one drew and signed for Mr. Smith]

MRS. SMITH: Listen to this, I'll read it to you; "It is their destiny ride the wind. It carries them to far way places. They leave at sundown, dark against the blaze; pursuing their course by measures that man does not yet comprehend. This annual rhythm of travel has been the way of waterfowl from the beginning of their time, one hundred million years before Homo Sapiens evolved in to human beings." Isn't that lovely? It's really nice.

[Group proceeds to look at photos, and memorabilia and comment on it]

MRS. SMITH: Here is Lucy Hartwell. That's James Ford Bell's daughter. Amy knows the Hartwell's son. He had some part in the Minnesota Land Trust. They were out at our place when Amy had the picnic for the Land Trust members.

MR. SMITH: I remember that. There's an old fashioned [unintelligible].

MRS. SMITH: Yes.

MR. HAWKINS: Apparently, this was financed or written by Dick Bonniecastle.

MRS. SMITH: They were the big supporters here.

MR. HAWKINS: It says here, "A Richard Bonniecastle book". So I assume that he financed the publication of it.

MRS. SMITH: Here in this forward by Peter Scott, it says, "The first time he came to Delta was in the fall of 1948." We wondered when that was, didn't we?

[The Smith's grandchildren are coming in and out, modeling new clothes. Comments are made regarding the "coolness" of some too long, pants].

MRS. SMITH: Peter Scott was not a writer, not like Al. He didn't have the gift, did he? He puts it all down, but when you read a paragraph that Al has written it kind of gets you.

MR. SMITH: Some people have that ability, and others don't.

MR. HAWKINS: That's a good picture too.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MRS. SMITH: Oh yeah. It's kind of like him too isn't it? It's kind of like him to have that kind of view and to be sort of unconventional, and a little bit different with him looking out of the corners of his eyes.

MR. HAWKINS: He's got a mischievous look in his eye there. He liked to play pranks and he enjoyed pranksters. He had a friend up at Dartmouth who wrote a book. You've got it here, I can't think of his name. Wasn't he a Dartmouth man?

MR. SMITH: No. But he came up there to live at Hanover, and I think one of the classes voted him in as a class member. He never went to Dartmouth.

MR. HAWKINS: Is that right? Well how did Jim know him then?

MR. SMITH: Jim was one of his protégés. Do you remember the column that Cory Ford used to write for Field and Stream, I think it was?

MR. HAWKINS: No, I don't.

MR. SMITH: It was called *The Lower Forty* and he had all of these characters in there. One of the characters was modeled after Jim. [Mr. Smith and Mr. Hawkins may be talking about Ding Darling]

MR. HAWKINS: I noticed that. I've heard him.

MRS. SMITH: [Mrs. Smith is reading, and having a chuckle about what she just read] the way he puts it, it's just so funny. He says, "And old Mallard hen hollered from the midst of a bull rush island, protesting with loud quacks. Close to shore, seven Coots bobbing their heads, crossed in front." [Mrs. Smith continues to read aloud] "He threw his shell and ditty bag over one shoulder so that it hung under left arm, shouldered the string of ducks, five on his chest, and five at his back, picked up his sheaved gun and started out against the golden sky. Tim, happy after his successful day, scattered scent left and right while on the trail."

Isn't it good?

MR. HAWKINS: I found your western Bird Guide. It's got the Towhee and the Black Headed Oriole and the Grosbeak all on the same page there.

MR. SMITH: Well, I guess there was no question about it once you saw a Towhee. When he mentioned that white breast, why, I'd know it.

MR. HAWKINS: Were they quite common in the valley in the summer as a nester.

MR. SMITH: Well, you see a few.

MR. HAWKINS: They are more common in the winter aren't they?

MR. SMITH: In the winter there is lots of them.

MR. HAWKINS: They are a very unusual bird at our place. We've only seen them three or four times since we've been there.

MR. SMITH: Oh, are they?

[Tape 3 ends and 4 begins]

MR. HAWKINS: Imagine what it was like when they carried one hundred pound packs!

MR. SMITH: That's right.

MR. HAWKINS: They put up with hardships that we can't even imagine.

MR. SMITH: I guess they were used to it. It was just part of every day life.

MR. HAWKINS: They probably got paid next to nothing too.

MR. SMITH: "The lard [sic] eaters", that's what they used to call them.

MRS. SMITH: The French?

MR. SMITH: Yes. For rations, they used to get pemmican and so much grease. It was just lard, you know. I suppose that they would burn up all that lard with all of that work.

MRS. SMITH: It must have sustained them.

MR. HAWKINS: They must have taken a lot of flour then, too.

MR. SMITH: I don't think they had any flour.

MR. HAWKINS: You don't think so? What did they use for their bread?

MR. SMITH: I'm not even sure that they had any bread.

MRS. SMITH: They probably just had meat.

MR. HAWKINS: It seems like they would have to have more than pemmican to live on.

MR. SMITH: I know that they had all kinds of pemmican.

MRS. SMITH: Well, they had lots of fish.

MR. SMITH: I suppose. There is an area just south of Portland where there are a lot of French people. They are the descendents of employees of the old Hudson Bay Company that worked Vancouver. There is a river that has a French name up there. As a matter of fact, when the residents of Oregon voted on whether Oregon was going to go for being a

part of the United States they had an election. They voted on it. As I understand the story, these Frenchmen up there, from Fort Vancouver thought that they were debating on a bounty to be paid on wolves. They voted for it.

MRS. SMITH: They did? Oh my golly!

MR. SMITH: Otherwise, we might belong to Canada.

MR. SMITH: Bob, you've got so many good books in there. You know the ones that have the titles on the back, so you can read it turned up on its side? I put those together so that they would hold the books in on each end. I've never seen so many titles. There are just so many wonderful books!

MR. HAWKINS: They look great.

MRS. SMITH: That's the only way to hold them, unless you've got a gigantic bookend on each end, and Bob doesn't. So there's no way to hold them, really.

MR. SMITH: Well you know when you get a great stack of books like that, and they start to lean one way or the other, they start to fall. You've got to have something to hold them up.

MRS. SMITH: They start to go. I heard them going on the left end there. There were several that had already tumbled down on the left end. So that's why I rearranged them, and laid them all down flat, a whole bunch of them; so they would hold these others up. It's just a wonderful library, with beautiful books! And I like that library table, don't you?

MR. HAWKINS: Uh-hum, it's great.

MRS. SMITH: It's a real nice table. Did you have that at home?

MR. SMITH: It's an old timer. I can't remember when I haven't seen it. I got some of these reprints of some of the old books. One of them is a reprint of the travels of John Bertram.

MRS. SMITH: Oh yes, Ellen loves those accounts. Aren't they good?

MR. SMITH: I do to. I've read that one several times. He went out to the Carolinas and to Georgia and into Florida and of course to Mobile and tells about his trip.

MRS. SMITH: He describes everything that sees.

MR. HAWKINS: He was the one that described the Wood Duck first. He called it the Summer Duck.

MR. SMITH: I've heard it called a Summer Duck from people in Arkansas.

MR. HAWKINS: They probably still call them that.

MR. SMITH: There's another by, I think it's either Gund or Henry, who went from Montreal to Mackinack Island and wintered there. He barely escaped from the Indians and [unintelligible] Lake Michigan, and finally went on way up to the head of Lake Superior. I wonder if Ellen has seen that. If she hasn't, she should, because that's right up in her neck of the woods.

MR. HAWKINS: Ellen is really interested in that kind of stuff too then? In fact, I had an article that I wrote for the *Wood Duck News Gram* back a while ago. I had that Bertram record in there. And one of the people that had described some of these early things about Wood Ducks finally got done in by the Indians. They finally caught up with him and got rid of him. I tell about that in this article that I wrote. I guess I'll have to go and see if I can find a map, because that bothers me; how they got from the St. Lawrence and Ottawa River across the Georgian [?] Bay.

MR. SMITH: Well, if you look and a map, it will be easy.

MR. HAWKINS: Will it? O.K., I'll go and see if I can find one. [Mr. Hawkins goes to look in another room]

MR. SMITH: I'll go and find a pop. [Something to drink]

MRS. SMITH: Do you want me to wheel you in?

MR. SMITH: No, I'll walk.

[Mr. Hawkins is back with a map. He and Mr. Smith look at it. They are discussing the route taken by explorers. Conversation is very garbled.]

MR. HAWKINS: O.K., and then they'd come around...

MR. SMITH: I don't know how they'd come around. They'd have to out the main channel. See that was one place that they came to, but then they went up to Sault Ste. Marie and on up to Lake Superior and into Fort Wager.

MR. HAWKINS: They'd come around to Thunder Bay here, and ...

MR. SMITH: And then up the Pigeon.

MR. HAWKINS: Here is the Pigeon. And here is Port William, and then Portage.

MR. SMITH: They came out at Lake Winnipeg. They went down the English route.

MR. HAWKINS: That's where Kevin went fishing this year, with his dad, up in English. It would be interesting to trace that across from the records, wouldn't it?

MR. SMITH: I know that on some of those rivers where there are some bad rapids; they did some diving and found all kinds of artifacts.

MR. HAWKINS: I can remember the English River. Let's see, where does the English come out here? [Looking at the map] The English must flow into the Winnipeg River.

MR. SMITH: I don't know.

MR. HAWKINS: They must have come out at North Bay here then.

[At this point in tape there are two conversations going on. One is between Mr. Smith and Mr. Hawkins and the other between the two ladies present, and a small female child. The ladies are talking about family matters and plans for later in the day.]

MR. HAWKINS: I wonder if that is free of dams, pretty much?

MR. SMITH: I don't know.

MR. HAWKINS: It says here that the "Ottawa River is the boundary between Ontario and Quebec. And in the early days the Ottawa was the primary waterway to the continent's interior. Fur traders, canoe, and timber men's rafts descended this water." See, the Ottawa branches off this way. It must be that they took off here, and went this way. The first explorers that went through there, and were trying to figure out a route must have had a time, huh? Not knowing where they were going from one week to the next, and whether they were connected or whatever.

MR. SMITH: I guess they did have a hard time. Of course they had Indians to guide them.

MR. HAWKINS: Yeah, that's right too.

MR. SMITH: They did the portages, and the ropes and so forth.

MR. HAWKINS: Did you know A. K. Fisher too?

MR. SMITH: I didn't know him, but I've seen him.

MR. HAWKINS: He must have been pretty old, wasn't he?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. He used to come around. He led the Cosmos Club.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, did he?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. He had his own special stool at the bar. There was a well-defined trail from his stool across the carpet to the john.

MR. HAWKINS: That Cosmos Club was pretty important to quite a few of them wasn't it?

MR. SMITH: Yeah. E. W. Alston spent his last days there.

MR. HAWKINS: Somebody took me to the Cosmos Club one time, when I was visiting him there. I think it was Cottem, but I'm not sure. Did Cottem belong there?

MR. SMITH: I'm sure he did.

YOUNGER WOMAN: Where was that? Where was that Club?

MR. HAWKINS: In Washington.

YOUNGER WOMAN: So some of the Fish and Wildlife Service people had a special bar?

MR. HAWKINS: Bob was saying that Dr. A.K. Fisher had a special stool, and he had a path worn to the "outhouse".

MR. SMITH: That's right, right across the carpet. I think I went to the Cosmos Club with Zumheiser.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh did you? Well that's interesting. I got to know his son, you know. He is going to be at this meeting. He is on the program at the Leopold Foundation get together in August of this year. He is a real nice guy. He sent me a report that he wrote when he was a boy of about fourteen or fifteen. He went with the Muries to Alaska, to Mount McKinley and the area all around there. He wrote up a day-by-day journal.

[More friends and family come in, recording is stopped]

